

NORTH NYASA REGION

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POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

Only the Ngunde, the Nyamwanga, and the Iwa seem to have had any paramount authority. Of these, only that of the Ngunde has been described in detail. The Nyamwanga had a paramount chief, the Mukoma, living over the border in Tanganyika. Under him the Northern Rhodesian Nyamwanga were always ruled by his sister, the Waimuka; directly under her were the headmen of villages. The Mukoma used to appoint his own sons or selected friends to be headmen of the larger villages. A nominal tribute, mainly fish, was sent by the Waimuka to the Mukoma, and the latter could also command annual labor in his gardens. The Iwa also had a paramount chief, Kafwimbi, who recognized common ancestry with the Mukoma but paid him no tribute. His country was divided into two sections, under two sub-chiefs, Mponga and Terefya. The succession to the chieftaincy is normally the same as commoner succession, i.e. brothers, then sons of the deceased, but the order need not be rigidly adhered to.¹

NOCHIE TRADITIONAL SYSTEM

The section on history briefly indicated the position of the Kyungu. He was wealthy, owing to the ivory trade, and used his wealth to maintain political links with the chiefs and nobles of the country. At the same time he was kept in strict religious seclusion, and the real government of the country was in the hands of the nobles of Ngunde, a group of hereditary nobles, descendants of the original companions of the first Kyungu. The relations of the great chiefs (descendants of sons of Kyungu) and the territorial nobles to the capital allowed of considerable local autonomy, the Kyungu's prestige being mainly religious. Each territorial noble was succeeded by one son; each chief was succeeded by two or more sons, so that the chieftains tended to supplant the territorial nobles in importance and number, and the junior branches of the house of any one great chief formed a hierarchy based on descent. The great chiefs, at their accession, were recognized by the Kyungu with gifts of cloth, and they brought the junior chiefs of their house to perform hoeing service, *salima*, for the Kyungu. Afterwards the junior chiefs performed *salima* for their great chief, and were similarly rewarded with entertainment. The great chief might invite the territorial nobles in his neighbourhood to accompany him in performing *salima*, but he could not command them as he could his junior chiefs. Apart from recognizing a certain authority of superior chiefs in judicial matters, and the right of the latter to command them to hoe, or in war, the junior chiefs had almost complete autonomy in their chieftains.²

Each chief had a traditional right to demand from his own subjects milk and bananas if he needed them, and to evict any man he pleased if he desired the site for his personal use or to give to a vassal (not to a commoner), offering the evicted tenant another site.³

The chieftains' consisted of a number of age-villages, older and younger men living apart with their own contemporaries. At the head of each age-village was a headman (called 'great commoner' by Wilson) chosen from among the villagers by the chief

¹ Colclough, 1924, pp. 40-5.

² *Ibid.*, p. 117A, pp. 48-9.

³ In the absence of information I do not know whether the following description of Ngunde and Nyamwanga chieftains and age-villages is capable of a wider application.

⁴ Wilson, p. 192B, p. 42.

already in the earliest legends are reflected the twin sources of the Kyungus' supremacy, for, as we shall see, they combined divine kingship with wholesale ivory trading. 173 643

The Kyungu who took Mbande was not alone, he brought with him into Ngonde five leading men whose names are still borne by their descendants: Katenga, Mulwa, Kyumba, Mboma and Nguai. Nor did he find the country empty; besides Simbobwe, who was himself a recent immigrant, there were Musyani, Mwenendeka, Mwenekaluma, Mwenekisindile, Mwenifumbo and others; they all had men of their own, and, with the exception of Simbobwe who fled, they all accepted the Kyungu as their overlord. To this day some of their names also survive in Ngonde. The Kyungu, according to the late Mwenifumbo,¹ brought cloth with him and used it to consolidate his position: "Then the Kyungu gave headcloths to us nobles, to Mwenekaluma, Mwenifumbo and the others; and he said to us: "You are the priests, you the indigenous owners of the land, do you pray for me that I, the chief, may sleep in peace."

I make no attempt here to date the arrival of the Kyungu in Ngonde, for to do so would require a careful collation of this tradition with those of neighbouring tribes. The present Kyungu is said to be about the eighteenth of that title in Ngonde, but, as the reigns of many Kyungus were very short and as some early names have probably been forgotten, this fact alone tells us little.

For the period from the coming of the first Kyungu to the birth of Mwangonde (who was about the tenth Kyungu in Ngonde) the legends are scanty and vague; but the following facts are generally attested by them. The leading men among the Kyungu's followers, together with the rulers of the indigenous population, came to form a class of hereditary nobles (*omakumbala*), within which, as we shall see, two groups were distinguished, those who lived near Kyungu at Mbande and those who did not. Important immigrants with followers of their own continued to enter Ngonde after the coming of the Kyungu and they also became hereditary nobles, either in the one group or in the other. The Kyungus, though credited with divine powers and enriched by the ivory trade, had but limited powers of secular action; they lived a life of religious seclusion, while the nobles ruled the country. Most of the male children of the Kyungu were killed at birth, and they themselves were killed when they fell sick, lest their sickness should spread magically among their people. 173 643 565

These early Kyungus lived with their wives on the top of the hill Mbande, inside a great enclosure. Near them, some on Mbande, some not, lived a group of nobles. This group, which is specifically referred

¹ Kumbi Mwenifumbo. He has died since we left Ngonde.

173 to as "the nobles of Ngonde" (*Awanzone*) included, firstly, the
 643 successors of those five leading men whom the first Kyungu brought with
 665 him¹, secondly the successors of two of the indigenous rulers whom the
 Kyungu had found in the country and who happened to live near
 Mbande² and, thirdly, seven others who joined the group later.³ These
 fourteen nobles lived at Mbande, each with a group of followers and
 exercised the central power at the Kyungu's command, or at least in his
 name. The names of all fourteen are still borne as hereditary titles by
 their successors in Ngonde to-day and, with two exceptions,⁴ all their
 successors still rank as nobles of Ngonde.

Besides the nobles of Ngonde near Mbande there were the other
 nobles "who lived at a distance," some in the plain, some in the hills.
 In the language of Ngonde they are simply referred to by the general
 term "nobles" (*amakambala*) but, in order to distinguish them from the
 nobles of Ngonde, I shall here call them "territorial nobles."

They consisted, firstly, of those indigenous rulers whom the first
 Kyungu found in Ngonde but who did not happen to live near Mbande,
 and, secondly, of important immigrants who constantly arrived in
 Ngonde with followers of their own and were given land. Some of these
 immigrants came from the east across the lake, others from the west,
 from what is now Northern Rhodesia. The present Kyungu gave us
 a list of thirty-seven families of territorial nobles, of whom only five or six
 were found in Ngonde by the first Kyungu, the remainder having entered
 afterwards. How many of these thirty odd immigrants came during
 the period of the early Kyungus and how many later we do not know.

In the middle period of Ngonde's history, as we shall see, two
 tendencies are manifest: the Kyungus begin to emerge from their religious
 seclusion and slightly to increase their secular power at the expense of
 the nobles of Ngonde, while the "sons of the Kyungu" increase in
 numbers, set up hereditary chiefdoms under him and gradually oust the
 territorial nobles from the Ngonde plain. But in this early period the
 nobles were the only effective rulers. At Mbande the nobles of Ngonde

¹ Katanga, Mulwa, Kyumba, Mboma and Ngol.

² Mueyani and Mwenandaka.

³ Mwenibila and Kyabinga were both of the same line as Mueyani but attained
 prominence later as heads of junior branches of it and both became nobles of
 Ngonde. And two others from the line of Mwenandaka—Kyija and
 Mwenakimbe—did the same. Besides these, three of the later immigrants
 became nobles of Ngonde. There was Mwenenitumba who, says legend,
 "was a good drum player and so was sent for by the Kyungu to come and
 live at Mbande;" there was Mwenenikibembwa, who came from Mbala
 (Aberdeen), and there was Kipaka, whose histories we do not know.

⁴ The two exceptions are Kyumba and Kipaka. Once one of the Kyumbas
 seduced a wife of the Kyungu and had to flee for his life across the Songwe;
 while Kipaka's descendants have become just ordinary commoners for some
 reason unknown to us.

mediated between the divine Kyungus and the outer world, while both in the hills and in the plain the territorial nobles governed each his own people without royal rivals—for most of the sons of the Kyungus were killed at birth. 173
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The exact conditions which led to this state of affairs are beyond our knowledge; there is no detailed evidence to explain just how the descendants of a wandering adventurer who succeeded to the camp and the ivory of "a great elephant hunter" should have become divine kings jealously controlled by their subordinates. All we can do is to set down in all its vagueness and uncertainty, such information as the tradition offers us.

The three crucial facts were, firstly the wealth of the Kyungus, which gave the other rulers a secular interest in them, secondly the constant immigration of important men, which kept up the numbers of these other rulers, and, thirdly, the killing of most of the sons of the Kyungus at birth; a custom whereby the territorial nobles were rid of possible rivals and the nobles of Ngonde were rid of possible supporters of the Kyungus against themselves. Reuben Mwenifumbo told us: "They feared that, if the Kyungu had many sons, they might seduce his wives and so bring sickness on him himself and on the country.¹ And they also feared that, if many of the Kyungu's sons grew up, they might destroy the nobles, they might ask, when the Kyungu died, how it was that he had died so suddenly!—I refer to his being killed when he fell sick or cut himself.—If there were only a few sons they could not protest (being only few), but if there had been many then all the nobles might have had their throats cut. So they kept two sons only alive. This was told me by the old Mulwa,² the father of the present Mulwa. He knew a great deal about the things of old. I asked him one day why the sons of Kyungu had been killed and he answered what I have just told you." Two reasons are given here: first the magical danger to the Kyungu (and through him to his people) of infidelity on the part of his wives, for his sons would naturally have more access to the sacred enclosure than other men; and second the danger that his sons might prevent his being killed when sick. The danger that they would supplant the territorial nobles is not mentioned, but it is hard to believe that the nobles were not conscious of it.

The nobles, both territorial and of Ngonde, still speak of themselves to-day as a single group with common interests opposed, to some extent, to those of the Kyungu and the chiefs; and, when we compare Ngonde with the Nyakyusa, it seems probable that there was some causal connection between the wealth of the Kyungus and the constant increase 643
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¹ *Ibid* *infra* Section 3 (b).

² Mulwa is the premier noble of Ngonde.

643 in the nobles' numbers by immigration, on the one hand, and the close
565 hold maintained by the nobles of Ngonde over the family life of the early
Kyungus, on the other. The Lwembe of Lubaga was, like the Kyungu
an immigrant into his district and he also had a group of hereditary
priests living with him who, both in their origins and their religious
functions exactly corresponded to the nobles of Ngonde; and they used
to kill the Lwembe when he fell sick. But they neither developed many
secular functions themselves nor ever prevented the royal family of the
Lwembe from increasing. The sons of the Lwembe founded hereditary
chiefdoms from the first. There had been indigenous rulers among the
Nyakyusa prior to the coming of the Lwembe, but they were soon dis-
placed by his sons and did not maintain themselves within the consti-
tution. But then the Lwembe was poor, and among the Nyakyusa there
was not the constant immigration of important men unrelated to
the Lwembe¹ as there was into Ngonde of important men unrelated to
the Kyungu. The comparison thus suggests very strongly a causal
connection between these facts; but the exact mechanism of the causation
is obscure.

173 The reasons for the killing of the Kyungu himself will be fully dis-
643 cussed in section three. But it must be mentioned here that the history
565 of Ngonde is full of refusals on the part of prospective heirs to accept the
position of Kyungu, and that one of the reasons for refusal was the short
life that a Kyungu so often had. In order to refuse it was usually
necessary to flee, for an heir once forcibly seized by the nobles of
Ngonde and set on the stool of the Kyungus could not abdicate; if he
did it was believed he would die. And thus was founded the house of
Katamba (or Mwenitete) in the plain north of Songwe River. One of
the early Kyungus died and "two of his sons, Katamba and a younger
brother, fled across the Songwe to Itete, to their grandfather; for the
name Mwenitete is in origin a noble not a royal name, the Kyungu had
married the daughter of the noble Mwenitete. They fled because they
feared to die on Mbande!"

In Itete the house of Katamba became hereditary chiefs and began
to spread their power through all the surrounding plain. But later the
Nyakyusa came down from the hills and drove them back across
Songwe. The boundaries of Ngonde² in this early period, were thus
wider than they are to-day. The plain north of the Songwe (which the

¹ There was another immigration into the district of the Nyakyusa, but it was
led, so says tradition, by a close kinsman of the Lwembe, whose sons, like the
Lwembe's own, became hereditary chiefs. (The Kukwe are ignored in this
footnote.)

² Using "Ngonde" always in the sense of the area of the Kyungu's supremacy.

Nyakyusa chiefs afterwards conquered, but which is still known as "Mu-Ngonde") was certainly included in it. And the men of Ngonde also claim that Musumba of the Ndali hills, and Mujombe and others in the present Northern Rhodesia were nobles of the Kyungu and sent him tribute.

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How much secular power the Kyungu and nobles of Ngonde then had we cannot know; but, as in the later period it can be proved to have been more effective in the plain near Mbande than in the hills, it is not unreasonable to suppose that so it was in the early period also.

Trade with the outer world there was, so legend says, from the first, and this trade went north. The present Kyungu told us: "The Kyungu used to send ivory to the coast, they sent men over the hills of the Ndali; the ivory that they took from Simbabwe went that way. And the men used to come back with cloths and iron goods and white crockery. This I heard from Mwakalengula who died as a very, very old man in the year 1900 or perhaps it was 1901."

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In later times the central power of the Kyungu and the nobles of Ngonde can be proved to have rested on the twin bases of religious faith and the control of great wealth; as these two conditions seem both to have been present in the early period we can assert with some confidence that then also they were the real bases of the central power.

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(b) A TURNING POINT.

"Kyungu Magemo had a sister who was married to Katenga, one of the nobles of Ngonde. And one day when the other nobles of Ngonde went to Ngana (a district of Ngonde) to fish—for fish were plentiful in Ngana—this woman followed them, and there she married Mwakasekele a man of Ngana. So the nobles returned and told Magemo that his sister had been taken to wife in Ngana, and all he said was, 'very well.' Later she bore a son to Mwakasekele and Kyungu Magemo named him Kasyombe."

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Now Magemo himself when he died left only one son, Mwangonde, and he had only survived by an accident. Mwangonde's mother came from Butambo (in the present Northern Rhodesia) and was a distant relative of Mulwa, another noble of Ngonde. Her delivery was unexpected and took place in the house of one of Mulwa's near kinsmen. So Mulwa hid her and the child, and then sent her away to Butambo. The other nobles of Ngonde accused him of having done so and were angry, for they wished to kill the child if it were a boy. Mulwa denied his action, but afterwards they heard that the child was a boy and alive. Now but for Mulwa the direct line of the Kyungu would have died out,

themselves, and with the Kisi. With the people of Mwela they exchanged canoes for hoes. And from the Kisi also they got hoes, which the Kisi in their turn had got in exchange from the Kinga.

Then, during the reigns of Mwangonde and his successors "the sons of the Kyungu" began more and more to displace the territorial nobles as rulers of the various districts of the Ngonde plain. They became hereditary chiefs (*amanyafyale*), each of whom was succeeded by two or more sons, who divided his country and tried to extend it. And thus the number of ruling chiefs now began to increase at a great rate. Each of the territorial nobles, on the other hand, was only succeeded by a single heir. Houses of chiefs were set up and a new hierarchy appeared, for the senior chief in each house ranked as the "father" of his juniors. The name of the founder of each house was preserved as a hereditary title borne by each head of that house in turn. Thus to-day we find in the Ngonde plain the house of the Katambas, (or Mwenitetes),¹ the house of the Kalongas, the house of the Mwakasungulas and so on, and, among the chiefs of Ngana, the house of the Mwafongos, the house of the Mwenengubwes, the house of the Kalombos, the house of the Kilupulas and so on. The heads of these houses were the great chiefs of Ngonde, subordinate to the Kyungu and each with a number of junior chiefs traditionally subordinate to him. Most of these great titles can be traced back to some important son either of Mwangonde or of Kasyombe; but in some cases junior branches also have acquired sufficient importance to be distinguished by hereditary titles which are borne by their heads². Whenever the bearer of one of these great titles became the Kyungu, his old title was at once taken by a successor in his house.

The chiefs supplanted the territorial nobles and took their subjects for their own in this way: "A great many territorial nobles have lost their power, for the Kyungus were in the habit of sending their sons to build with them in their countries. A Kyungu would send one of his sons (i.e. a chief) to a certain noble saying 'I send this your son to build with you, his father'—for the nobles were called 'father' by the sons of the Kyungu—, so the noble would welcome him. But in after years the people would give their affection to the son of the Kyungu and the noble would lose his power. And yet, even so, in the old days the two of them, chief and noble, would remain on friendly terms." . . . "Some of the nobles lost their power through the cunning of the chiefs. For example the noble Mwenifumbo used to have a country of his own,

¹ This house, as we have seen, dates from the early period.

² The first Malema, for instance, was a son of Mwakasungula, the first Kajuni of Mwenengubwe.

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but then he was given a young chief, Mwakijule, to look after as a child. 173
 The father of Mwakijule (who was not the Kyungu) asked Mwenifumbo 643
 to bring him up; but then when he grew up he became the ruler of the 565
 country! And others lost their power to young chiefs who had 622
 married their daughters and then come to live near them.

Now all informants agree on three points: Firstly that it was the prestige of the royal blood which was responsible for this loss of power, secondly that the process was a gradual one and thirdly that the chiefs and the dispossessed nobles generally continued to live together on amicable terms. "The people gave their affection to the son of the Kyungu," but not all at once; some men at first would continue to regard themselves as the noble's men while others looked more to the chief. The noble acquiesced in this process and became in the end but the most important and respected commoner of the new chiefdom. For the chiefs apparently always treated such nobles with the greatest consideration, continued to call them "father" and to defer to their advice. The nobles retained all their religious functions and their right to participate in the selection of Kyungus and great chiefs, while their own titles continued to be handed on with due ceremony to their successors. All that they lost was leadership in war, the power of requisitioning food, together with the main responsibility for feasting the common people, and the formal position of chief justice. But in actual fact a noble's opinion on a law case was probably seldom disputed by the chief who had asked for it.

We have already suggested that during this middle period the 173
 balance of secular power between the nobles of Ngonde and the divine 643
 Kyungu himself began to change, and we have noted his descent from 565
 Mbande and the stopping of the killing of his sons as undoubted examples of this. But the nobles of Ngonde still had the real power at Mbande: "they alone conversed with the Kyungu; no one else saw him except when they went in to make obeisance. All orders came from them. Even with the masomo, the wives of the Kyungu, it was the nobles of Ngonde who put each one into the house of the Kyungu for a week at a time and then took her out and put in another. No one else built their houses near the Kyungu except these nobles (and their own immediate followers.)"

Such incidents as the going to war of Kyungu Mwakasungula, and the abandonment of the custom of building an enclosure (*ulupaso*) in the reign of Mwambelo³ seem significant in the light of modern developments; but we cannot be sure that any very radical constitutional change would

³ Vide infra pp. 28-9.

173 necessarily have followed from them, had modern conditions been
643 different. The evidence is inconclusive.
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565 Now not all territorial nobles in the Ngonde plain have been
642 supplanted by "the sons of the Kyungus" even to-day; while in the
622 hills inland they have mostly retained their power. And so in
discussing the political system of Ngonde under the middle Kyungus,
it is necessary to distinguish carefully between four different kinds of
political unit: (1) the chiefdoms in the plain, each ruled by a hereditary
chief related to the Kyungu; (2) the fiefs (if I may adapt this word from
a feudal to a primitive context) in the plain, ruled by hereditary nobles
unrelated to the Kyungu; (3) the fiefs in the hills inland, also ruled by
hereditary nobles, but differing in many ways from the fiefs in the plain,
and (4) the chiefdoms of the houses of Nyondo and Kameme in the hills.

642 This paper is mainly concerned with chiefdoms and fiefs of the
622 plain. There each of the chiefdoms consisted, as among the Nyakyusa,
of a group of age-villages, older and younger men living apart with their
own contemporaries. At the head of each village was a headman, or
great-commoner (*ulifumu*) chosen for life from among the villagers by
the chief and the great-commoners (*amafumu*) of the senior villages of
the chiefdom. Except in the case of very small chiefdoms each chief
was succeeded by two or more sons who divided the villages among
them. The transference of power from the old chief to his sons normally
began in his lifetime at the "coming out" (*wousoka*) when they were
formally shown to the country as chiefs and magically treated. The
constitution of every chiefdom was that of limited monarchy, for the
chief was dependent upon his great-commoners, who advised and, in
many ways, controlled him. In the status of chief and great-commoners
religious elements played an important part.

642 But, whereas among the Nyakyusa each chiefdom, save the very
622 small ones, was, in secular matters, quite independent of its neighbours
643 and each chief was a sovereign, in Ngonde, on the other hand, the wealth
565 of the Kyungu and the nobles of Ngonde made them the apex of a
political hierarchy. And thus, while among the Nyakyusa the senior of
two brother chiefs could only command his junior in religious matters,
when they sacrificed to their common father's spirit, in Ngonde he
could occasionally command him in other ways also, he could, for
example, summon him to war or to hoe,¹ and he had a certain slight
judicial authority.² Of two brother chiefs the junior was subordinate
to the senior; in each of the great houses all other chiefs were subordi-
nate to the head of the house, the great chief with a hereditary title;

¹ Vide infra sections 4 and 6.

² Vide infra section 5.

[text continues on p. 24]

642 the great chiefs themselves were subordinate to Kyungu. But every
622 ruling chief right up the scale, except the Kyungu himself, had also his
643 own great-commoners and people directly subordinate to him. More-
565 over the subordination of some chiefs to others and of all to Mbande
was a very different thing from the subordination of authorities in a
civilized state. It was still above all a religious and ceremonial subordi-
nation, but in matters of secular justice and administration there was a
very large measure of local autonomy.

Within the chiefdom the organization of families and villages was
more or less¹ the same as that described in the first paper of this series,
and need not be further described here.

642 Among the fiefs of the plain there was another hierarchy, depend-
643 ing not upon seniority of birth but upon priority of arrival in Ngonde.
565 For each important immigrant who entered the country with followers
of his own went first to an already established territorial noble, not
straight to Mbande; and it was the already established noble, who then
acted as his sponsor, took him to Mbande and told the nobles of Ngonde
and the Kyungu of his request for land. The normal procedure then
was for the nobles of Ngonde to be sent by the Kyungu to arrange with
his sponsor where to settle him. And thereafter he ranked, at least for
ceremonial purposes, as his sponsor's junior. Thus the territorial noble
Kasyombe was junior to his sponsor Mwenekibuta, and so on. But no
ruling noble was subordinate to any chief save the Kyungu. The nobles,
both territorial and of Ngonde, describe themselves as "the great-
commoners (*amafumu*) of the Kyungu," likening the relationship of the
fiefs and the Kyungu to that of the villages of a single chiefdom and
their chief.

642 The organization of each single fief seems to have resembled in
565 many ways that of a small chiefdom, each was divided into at least two
age-villages, so that old men and their sons should live separately; for
it was taboo in all the Ngonde plain, as among the Nyakyusa, for father
and daughter-in-law ever to meet. Kinship, however, was more
emphasized as a reason for living together than in the chiefdoms, and we
are told that the inhabitants of the fiefs were usually related, either as
kinsmen or affines, to the territorial noble concerned; while the age-
villages of a fief had no great-commoners at their head. Otherwise the
customs which obtained in the plain, both in the fiefs and the chiefdoms,
were, on the whole, homogeneous.

Each of the nobles of Ngonde had a few subject commoners of his
own living at Mbande with him, divided up into two age-villages; so

¹ The climatic difference determines certain differences in the system of land-tenure
of Ngonde and of the Nyakyusa, but of these we have made no study.

that the organization of Mbande may be described either as a group of small fiefs clustered together or as the capital chiefdom of the Kyungu, in which the nobles of Ngonde acted as the great commoners, each in two small age-villages.

Besides the nobles of Ngonde and their own followers there lived at Mbande men called *valukuta*, who acted as the personal messengers and police of the Kyungu. They were not hereditary officials but chosen for their speed by the nobles of Ngonde, who also gave them their orders. Anyone might become a messenger, the son of a chief, or of a commoner, or even a slave.

Of the customs of the hill fiefs and of the chiefdom, of the houses of Nyondo and Kameme we know very little; but it is certain that in many of them different dialects were spoken from that of the plain and that their inhabitants called themselves (as they still do to-day) Sukwa, Wenya, Lambya, and so on, rather than "men of Ngonde." And these upland groups were much more loosely attached¹ to the central power at Mbande than were the people of the plain.

There is some evidence to show that, even in the early period, the nobles of Ngonde did not always take the most immediate heir of a dead Kyungu to succeed him; during the middle period it is certain that they did not. The Kyungu had to be taken from the royal family but, within limits, the most suitable man might be chosen. And with the increase in the numbers of the chiefs the area of selection grew constantly wider. The constitutional methods of selection will be discussed in section five.

(d) THE MIDDLE KYUNGUS: CIVIL WARS.

We must now turn to the rivalry between the chiefs of Ngelenge and Ngana. "Mwangonde begot Kalonga, Mpeta,² and Mwanasele. And they, when they grew up, quarrelled with the sons of Kasyombe: 'Let them move further off, they are only commoners, we object to their proximity!' So they made war on them and drove them fleeing out of Ngana with only a few men. Before this war began their father Mwangonde had forbidden them to fight and commanded them to be friends." We notice here a point, which will be discussed later in section five, that the Kyungus, though not themselves involved in the civil wars, yet had little or no power to keep the peace.

"Then the sons of Kasyombe went to the Ndali to make allies of them and they returned together and fought the sons of Mwangonde

¹ cf. Section 3.

² Mpeta (old *aywa*) later took the name of Mwanasele.

the senior territorial nobles of the plain, and they told their juniors. A sacrifice was made in one of the sacred groves of the Kyungus and all fires in the whole Ngonde plain were put out. And then "all the chiefs from every country near Mbande and the nobles and all the great-commoners and all the ordinary men and the women too went to Kyimbwe." At Kyimbwe, which is a cross-roads in the bush, they threw away the ashes of their old fires; while those few people who could not get to Kyimbwe threw them away near their own houses on the same day as the others. At Kyimbwe new fire was made with fire-sticks by the nobles of Ngonde and distributed to the whole plain in order. Great chiefs and senior nobles took it first and passed it to their juniors, chiefs passed to great-commoners, and in each group the common people got it from their own ruling noble or their own great-commoner.

And then, later in the year when the first maize and the first pumpkin leaves were ready to eat, an elaborate first-fruit ceremony was carried out. The first-fruits were offered by the nobles of Ngonde in the grove of the previous Kyungu, the one who had last died. "Then the great chiefs would do so next—Kalonga, Mwakasungula, Mwembelo, Katamba and the chiefs of Ngana also, each in his own sacred grove (i.e. at the grave of his own predecessor in the title). . . . And then after them everyone, both chiefs and people, each at his father's grave. All offered first-fruits to their own spirits. And finally they would eat themselves, each with his chief wife. But beforehand they would not eat for fear of angering the spirits."

These two rituals concerned the plain alone; the nobles and chiefs of the hills are said to have had similar rituals of their own but they were not synchronized with or dependent upon those of the plain.

In time of tribal war also the Kyungu and the nobles of Ngonde led the people in prayer. All chiefs and nobles were summoned from the plain and the great ones entered the Kyungu's house to receive their instructions: "When he had finished speaking he would tell them to go to pray. So they would leave his house and gather all together, all chiefs and men, and pray. The premier noble of Ngonde would begin, asking each of the sacred groves of the Kyungus in turn to bless them in the fight. And then the great chiefs would pray after them" (each addressing his own predecessors in his title). The territorial nobles did not pray, for it was the royal family alone whose spirits were then addressed. Here again it was the plain alone that was concerned.

Now this organization of religious ritual in the Ngonde plain was both a factor of and itself determined by the general political

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600 structure. We shall see in later sections how many details of the secular power of Mbande and of the lesser authorities were dependent upon their religious functions. But the reverse is equally true. 796 Among the Nyakyusa, where the hierarchy of chiefs had scarcely any secular content at all, the organization of religious ritual was far less elaborate. Cattle were sent to Lubaga by the other chiefs to be sacrificed for rain and health; but the "clearing out of the ashes" was done by each chiefdom separately; there was no general first-fruit ritual at all;¹ while, as war was never waged on a tribal basis, prayers and sacrifices for military success were always undertaken by each warring chiefdom alone.

643 Besides the Kyungus the great chiefs of Ngonde also were believed to be able to avert local droughts and misfortunes in their districts by offerings to their own immediate ancestors; and the lesser chiefs like- 622 wise and the territorial nobles—each in his own little area. While 565 among the territorial nobles, the original owners of the land had wider 769 powers. It will be remembered that to them the first Kyungu is said to 731 have given head-cloths and asked for their prayers. Sometimes people would prophesy future misfortune "at Kisindile", or "at Kaluma" or "at Ifumbo," or would prophesy of present misfortunes that such was their source. Then the territorial noble concerned² would be formally visited by the nobles of Ngonde, and he and they together would offer sacrifice to his ancestors on behalf of all Ngonde.

778 And then also there were sacred lagoons near the lake—Nthola, 776 Kambwe, Kibondo, Mulale and Katindi. They were associated not 782 with ancestral spirits at all but with a vaguely defined supreme deity named Mbamba. And beside them also prayers and sacrifices were made from time to time by the nobles of Ngonde.

771 Over these other spiritual powers we need not linger, save to notice one most significant fact. The participation by the Kyungu in 643 the divinity of his ancestors was no isolated phenomenon in Ngonde. 565 The head of every family in the country, whether of chiefs or 622 commoners, was similarly placed; in his own family and, in the case of a chief or noble, in his own area too, he was both a priest and a demi-god; he dealt with the spirits and by virtue of his relation to them shared their powers; his anger could curse. The Kyungus were but the greatest of many divinities. And thus there was in theistic ritual a high degree of local and family autonomy; local or family misfortunes

¹ Particular people among the Nyakyusa carried it out: reigning chiefs, senior great-commoners, prophets, and any person whose birth was held to be due to magical treatment of a previously barren woman. But only they.

² Mwene-kisindile, Mwene-kaluma, Mwene-ifumbo etc.

were dealt with by the local rulers or by the family-heads, not by the central authorities. It was only occasionally that general fears or misfortunes turned all men's thoughts together to Mbande.

Now the great-commoners of every chief were believed to have independent access to his ancestral spirits and this gave them a spiritual hold over him. If they compared him too unfavourably with his predecessors then, it was believed, those predecessors might hear and afflict him in various ways. And so it was also with the nobles of Ngonde and the reigning Kyungu. But as this belief was intimately linked with the belief in witchcraft it will be more conveniently analysed in that context.¹

(b) *THE MAGICAL ELEMENT.*

Magic (the belief that certain particular objects, events, words or actions, involving particular people in particular situations, possessed in themselves an extraordinary power) was an essential ingredient of the old pagan religion of Ngonde. While the greatest magical object in the country was, traditionally, the body of the Kyungu. And the fact that the central political authority of Ngonde was so largely vested in the nobles of Ngonde was due above all to their responsibility for controlling this magical object in the public interest.

If the Kyungu cut himself, and more particularly if his blood fell to the ground, then it was the duty of the nobles of Ngonde to kill him, lest the whole land be afflicted with disease; and if he was ill likewise. "They considered that if his blood fell to the ground that was his life falling. And they likened him to a god, considering it taboo for a god to be wounded; they thought that if his blood fell to the ground it would turn into a sickness and all the people would die. And so, when the Kyungu was wounded, they thought it best to put him out of the way and start afresh with a new one. They thought it taboo for him to have even the tiniest wound on his body. And it was equally taboo for him to fall ill; everyone else, it was believed, would fall ill too; it was better to put him out of the way so that the people should keep well."

In consequence of this belief elaborate precautions were taken to maintain the Kyungu's health. Sexual impurity was believed to be magically dangerous to health in many ways and so the Kyungu, above all men, must be guarded from it. It was not considered safe even for his own wives to cook his food, lest one of them touch it during a menstrual period, and so young boys who had not yet reached puberty

¹ *vide infra* section 3 (a).

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643 The gardens of the Kyungu were divided traditionally into public
652 (*imilasa*) and private ones (*imigunda gya masano*). The produce of the
first was mainly devoted to the entertainment of important guests—
chiefs, territorial nobles and the ivory traders from over the lake. That
643 of the second to the personal needs of the Kyungu and his household.
651 The public gardens were hoed and weeded by the great chiefs and the
nobles of the Ngonde plain with their subordinates and followers, the
private ones by the nobles of Ngonde with theirs.

The hoeing of his public gardens by the chiefs and nobles of the
plain was as intimately connected with the religious status of the Kyungu
as was the bringing of royal tuks to him, for the belief in his rain-
making powers provided a moral sanction for it. Drought and disease,
as we have seen, were often attributed to the displeasure of the living
Kyungu; and the failure of some ruler to bring his people to work
the public gardens was, so we were told, the most usual way of dis-
pleasing him. The wealth and the divinity of the Kyungu were
inextricably linked. Nor without these public gardens could the
lucrative ivory trade have been maintained. In the primitive world of
Ngonde there were no "purely business relations;" tributaries and
buyers alike had to be royally feasted.

643 In the hoeing of the public gardens the political hierarchy of
651 Ngonde was made evident, for each great chief came separately to hoe,
655 accompanied both by the local chiefs of his own house and by those
622 territorial nobles who lived near him. At an appropriate time either
the great chief or one of his noble neighbours would suggest going to
Mbande to hoe, and the former would then summon all his local chiefs.
But he could not summon the nobles; with them it was a polite
arrangement between equals. "When they went to hoe for the Kyungu
it might be a neighbouring noble and not the great chief at all who made
the first suggestion; and then the two of them would go together with
their followers. For the nobles are not subjects of the great chiefs but
only of the Kyungu."

651 The main crop grown in the public gardens was millet (*amalen*) for
641 beer. And at some time during the year all the chiefs and nobles¹ who
476 had brought men to hoe² them were summoned to taste "the beer of
273 the *malasa*." So we see that, in one aspect, the hoeing of the public
gardens of the Kyungu was but an extension on a large scale of the

¹ It is clear from our notes that each chief and noble brought to this beer-
drink some of his people; but it is not clear whether he brought all those who
had worked or only the more important among them.

² I speak of "hoeing" and "men." It is fairly certain that the women also
came to weed afterwards and that they participated in the beer. We omitted,
however, to find this out.

ordinary custom of hoeing parties which is still followed by every chief and commoner in this whole area. Every man, two or three times a year, invites his neighbours to hoe for him and rewards them with a beer-drink in the evening. Where the hoeing of the Kyungu's public gardens differed from this custom was in the religious sanction behind it and in its political organization.

After the local chiefs had finished the *malasa* for the Kyungu they would next return and hoe a small garden for their great chief who had led them to Mbande. But in this the territorial nobles took no part. Such gardens were not called *malasa* and there was no distinction made between them and the great chief's private ones. For this custom also there was a moral sanction; for the great chiefs, we remember, also participated in divinity. "If his people forget to hoe for Mwakasungu then perhaps a little local epidemic of some kind would break out and the diviners, when questioned, would attribute it to their forgetfulness. Or perhaps a prophetic fit would fall on some one and he would tell them to go and hoe (or they would rue it!)"

And, still lower in the hierarchy, among a group of chiefs who were half-brothers, the senior chief used sometimes to summon his juniors to bring their men and hoe; but "their acquiescence depended on their friendship for him"; it seems to have had no effective moral sanction.

The private gardens of the Kyungu were traditionally very small indeed, for the constant income of food from the plain made them all but unnecessary. Such as they were, they were worked by the people of Mbande, i.e. the nobles of Ngonde and their followers. The wives of the Kyungu lived like ladies and had all the normal work of a woman, including weeding, done for them.

The income of the Kyungu in slaves and cattle cannot be understood save in the context of judicial procedure and warfare with which we have not yet dealt¹.

The income of Mbande reached others besides the Kyungu and his wives. We have already seen how the nobles of Ngonde took their share of the food which was brought in; and some of it they gave to their messengers, the *wakakata*. Neither the nobles of Ngonde nor the messengers, according to the present Kyungu, used to have any large gardens of their own; they also were maintained at the public expense. And the nobles of Ngonde shared also in the proceeds of the ivory.

With the exception of a pile of tusks upon which the Kyungu slept, most of the ivory which reached Mbande, from the time of Mwangonde

¹ Vide *infra* sections 3 and 4.

and say 'This is the new Kyungu.' And when they make obeisance to Kyungu all the rest, both the chiefs and nobles, fall to the ground, but Kalonga alone remains seated, for he is the senior of the whole line." 643

In the succession to the great chiefdoms there was formerly a difference of procedure in the two royal lines, that of Ngelenge and that of Ngana. When a great chief of Ngelenge died, the nobles of Ngondo were sent by the Kyungu, both to the funeral and, later, to assist in the selection of a successor. "With the great chiefs of Ngelenge it is we, the nobles of Ngondo, who have always caught their successors. We catch Kalonga, Mwakaungula Mwambelo, Katamba (or Mwenitete) and Mwambunga.¹ But we have never gone to catch the successors of the lesser chiefs, nor used we to catch the chiefs of Ngana either, for they are of the female line.... When a great chief (of Ngelenge) has died we go and consult secretly with the great-commoners and then, if one of the dead man's immediate heirs is suitable we catch him, but if not we may pass them over and take someone else who is, it maybe, quite junior in that house but who entertains his people generously. Him we hit with a dry stick saying, we have you, you are M—(title of the great chief) now! The chosen man we set upon a stool; this is the ancient custom. We always (used to) select mature men for these positions, not just youths." 622 565

"The great titles among the Ngana chiefs" we were told "are five: Mwenengubwe, Mwafongo, Kalambo, Kilupula and Mwabalambo. In the old days the nobles of Ngondo did not go to catch them, because they were only the female line; they would summon their great-commoners to Mbande and enquire who was to succeed and, when they had discussed it with them, tell them to go and catch the selected man to be the new chief. Then the great-commoners would return and discuss it with the other four great chiefs of Ngana, after which they would catch the chosen man." 554

The qualities looked for both in a Kyungu and a great chief were the same, with one exception: he had to be "a ruling chief.... elderly man....one who was respectful in his manner to the leading commoners.....a wise chief who knew how to feed his people." The emphasis on generosity in entertainment is most striking, every informant stresses it above all other qualities. Generosity and the possession of abundance of food were the supreme traditional marks of a chief both in Ngondo, among the Nyakusa and in many other parts of Africa as 643 622 554

¹ The house of Mwambunga was originally a junior branch of that of Katamba.

² Mwambanda and Kyabinga. Other informants make it clear that not only the nobles of Ngondo but the territorial nobles of the plain also participate in the selection of these great chiefs.

643 well. The one additional qualification of a great chief was bravery in
622 war; the Kyungus never fought and so in their case bravery was less
654 important.

565 The succession of the nobles of Ngonde, of the territorial nobles of the plain and of the territorial nobles of the hills was similar to that of the great chiefs: the nobles of Ngonde themselves went and discussed with the leading man of the dead noble which member of his family to appoint in his place; and the immediate heirs were passed over if unsuitable.³ But in the case of the territorial nobles the successor of the original noble sponsor or protégé of that family also took part in the discussions. It will be remembered that there was an, at least ceremonial, hierarchy among the territorial nobles, depending upon the priority of their arrival in Ngonde and the fact that a later arrival was always introduced at Mbande by some established noble and given land near him. And the relationship then established between the fiefs continued to manifest itself at every subsequent succession.

"Mwenelupembe was a Nyika but then he came here to Ngonde and the Kyungu gave him land by the lake. Then later Mwalugali came from Mwela, and Mwenelupembe told the Kyungu that he had come; whereupon the Kyungu sent the nobles of Ngonde with Mwenelupembe to give him land. And still, when a Mwalugali dies it is Mwenelupembe and the nobles of Ngonde who discuss with his men the choice of a successor. Then, still later, Kasembe came to Mwalugali who told Mwenelupembe, who told the Kyungu. Kasembe came without men; he came from Mwela like Mwalugali but was not a kinaman of his. So the Kyungu said that Kasembe should build with Mwalugali. Then last of all came Songwe with some of his relatives, to Mwalugali. Now Songwe was a kinaman of Kasembe's. Mwalugali told Mwenelupembe who, in his turn, told the Kyungu.—And the Kyungu decided that as Songwe and Kasembe were kinamen they should be given land together, but a little apart from Mwalugali. And still they are associated, all four, and when one of them dies the other three come to the funeral and together send the message to the Kyungu. And the three of them consult with the nobles of Ngonde about the choice of a successor; they, the nobles of Ngonde and the relatives of the dead noble consult together,

622 The succession to the ordinary local chiefdoms of Ngonde was, like

³ Later in their conversation it was made clear, however, that, in the case of the more distant territorial nobles, both in the plain to the north and in the hills to the west, it was only in the succession of the most important ones that the nobles of Ngonde went in person. When a lesser noble died then the Kyungu would send to the great chief who was nearest (to Kibapula in the west and to Kalumbo in the north), asking him to send men of his own to "seek" the successor.

is generally admitted that all chiefs are less affected by this fear than they used to be. The secularization of the constitution tends, in this connection, to make it more autocratic.

On the economic side it is difficult to exaggerate the change in the relative wealth of rulers and people. The change is temporarily obscured by the historical accident of the present Kyungu's personal fortune, but this, when he dies, will go to his own heir, not to his successor in the Kyunguahip. The Kyungu's total official salary in 1937 was £72 a year and those of the "Sub-chiefs" varied from about £4 10s. to £12 a year. The nobles of Ngonde all received either 10s. or 15s. a year, with the exception of Mulwa who received 30s. These salaries, which are paid out of the Native Treasury, are the modern substitute for the profits of the ivory-trade, which the Kyungu shared with his subordinates, together with the regular tribute of food and the proceeds of tribal warfare and of punitive expeditions, all of which sources of income have now dried up. And these salaries do not make possible the giving of any valuable gifts to subordinates and subjects. The local rulers also receive slight financial subsidies from the Native Treasury. Each "Village Headman" is allowed to retain 3d. from the tax of every adult male subject of his own and the "Important Headmen" (great chiefs) receive in addition subsidies ranging from 5s. to 40s. a year. This custom has replaced that of the requisitioning of food; but, owing to the smallness of all the present chiefdoms and fiefs of the plain, few "Village Headmen" receive more than £1 a year from this source.¹

It is open to commoners, on the other hand, to become as rich or richer than most of their rulers. The head clerk in the Boma in 1937 received £52 a year, and there were fifty-three other Government employees who all received £12 or over; Native Christian Ministers and Evangelists all received many times the salary of Mulwa while young men often returned from the Lupa gold-fields with savings of several pounds.

The decline of polygyny in Ngonde again reduces the relative wealth of the subordinate chiefs and nobles in comparison with their people. Women are increasingly reluctant, for various reasons, to be married by polygynists, and the old style of entertainment is changing. Few chiefs and nobles, save the present Kyungu himself, now have sufficient wives and unmarried children to be able to entertain on a large scale. In the case of ordinary chiefs and territorial nobles (the "Village Headmen" of to-day) this poverty is not in itself very significant, for with the dwindling

¹ The average receipts of the one hundred and twenty-four "Village Headmen" in the Ngonde plain were almost exactly 10/- per annum in 1936. They had, that is, an average of forty tax-payers each.

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178 in size of the groups they rule, they have fewer subjects to entertain.
 ● 565 But the "Sub-chiefs" and the "Important Headmen" cannot cease to entertain largely without losing much of their pre-eminent status.

178 The outlawing by Government of civil and tribal war, combined
 692 with the new economic and religious conditions, has enormously extended the normal range of social relationships among the people of Ngonde; and a centralized judicial system has necessarily been developed to deal with the new situation. The old forms of local autonomy have ceased.

178 The continuity which is observable between the present constitution
 642 of Ngonde and that of the middle period is mainly determined by three factors. In the first place the Government of the Protectorate deliberately supports in positions of high authority the legitimate successors of some of the old rulers. In the second place the judicial functions of these successors, which have been greatly extended, have replaced, to some extent, the old religious and military functions. And, in the third place, the present Kyungu is, as it happens, a rich man. A decentralized mercantile divinity has been transformed into a centralized Native Authority with some continuity of personnel, with the substitution of new functions for old and with the assistance of a private fortune.

(b) FROM GOD TO MAGISTRATE.

178 The first two of these factors of continuity—Government support
 692 and the increase of judicial functions—must be discussed together, for it is mainly because of their utility as subordinate magistrates that the Government supports the Native rulers of Ngonde.

Modern conditions, in the sphere of law, bring about two great changes. Firstly the integration of the one-time primitive society of Ngonde with the civilized world greatly increases the range of social relationships among its people, and so renders ineffective much of the traditional legal machinery. And, secondly, the introduction of Christianity, of political control by the British and of European economic enterprise inevitably changes the content of the law. Granted the general conditions of contact between Africans and Europeans in Central Africa a transformation of all its traditional legal systems is seen to be an inescapable necessity.

Common law must now be maintained by a hierarchy of legal authorities reaching far beyond the boundaries of Ngonde, if it is to be maintained among its people at all. As I write these words in Livingstonia, a thousand miles by road from Mbande, there is a man of Ngonde working in a shop within a hundred yards of my office. While in Ngonde itself it is no longer true that a man's friends and neighbours, or even his immediate rulers, can ever be sure of constraining him effectively if he

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tional rivals of those of Ngelele; most of the traditional reasons which led them to accept the supremacy of a Kyungu of the house of Ngelele, whenever one was elected, have now ceased to influence them; while they themselves, as we shall see in a moment, are now barred from the succession. Moreover the Kyungu's supremacy is now mainly operative in the unaccustomed sphere of law. And so a new reason for admitting that supremacy has had to be more forcibly presented to them than to the other rulers of Ngonde.

Once forcibly presented, however, the new reason seems to have been admitted in place of the old ones without much difficulty. For in 1936, the next year, Kilupula spontaneously led his people to the Kyungu and formally handed over a cow to him, thereby re-establishing friendship and mutual respect between the two of them. The dispute has ended in a manifest harmony.¹

It is relevant to mention here that in the first five months of 1937 only one case was taken on appeal from the Kyungu's court to that of the District Commissioner.

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The general status both of the great chiefs and of the local chiefs and nobles (the "Important" and "Village Headmen,") as also of the great-commoners, has been radically altered by the new legal conditions. Formerly these authorities were the mainstay of a primitive justice, but to-day they could not possibly enforce any legal decisions without the backing of the central Government. And this backing they do not have. Their sphere of influence is so small² that it has not been thought worth while to give them any formal judicial authority; they are now mere arbitrators and all important cases go to court.

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The modern constitution of Ngonde is thus more centralized than the old. The support of the Government is given to, and effective judicial power is concentrated in the hands of half a dozen men, with their own advisers. The new judicial functions of the Kyungu and the selected "Sub-chiefs" have, in fact, been transferred to them from the local rulers. Some such centralization was inevitable under modern conditions but the details are dependent upon the decisions of the Government.

(c) PETER THE FORTUNATE.

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The wealth of the present Kyungu is not only due to his great personal abilities. For twenty years before his appointment as Regent (when he himself became the Kyungu in all but name) he was the full-

¹ This phrase begs no questions about private feelings, upon which we have no evidence.

² This is less true of the great chiefs (the "Important Headmen") than of the rest; and possibly an understanding of their status will alter the attitude of the Administration to them.

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Magemo to Mwakashanga no Kyungu has ever been succeeded by his own immediate heir; the choice of Peter as successor to Mwangalaha was unique, for he was his full brother and the heir to his property, but then Peter's ability and personal wealth were unique also. And in the case of the great chiefs and the nobles also the principle of election is still followed.

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The grounds of election have slightly altered. Generosity and wealth are still important, but "wisdom in European ways" is now more looked for than maturity, and shortly before our visit a fairly young man was chosen as Mwakashungula. Bravery in war, of course, no longer matters.

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The Administration have so far made little use of any great chiefs except the three who are now "Sub-chiefs;" but the others (the "Important Headmen") could be made into effective local rulers, if their salaries were raised. The ordinary chiefs and nobles (the "Village Headmen") are too numerous and have too few subjects to be very effective links in the chain of modern authority. But many of the great chiefs command the respect of considerable numbers. Moreover the fact that they are already being elected for their "wisdom in European ways" suggests that they will prove competent to deal with modern problems.

The traditional secular procedure of election is still followed, with some exceptions: the nobles of Ngonde are now sent by the Kyungu to participate in the "catching" of the great chiefs of Ngana¹ on the spot; the District Commissioner is informed of the result of every election; while the Kyungu himself, no longer secluded, takes a bigger share in making the choices than his predecessors very well could. And many of the religious elements of the traditional procedure, such as the sitting of a new Kyungu on the iron stool *Kigambi*, have fallen out of use.

The sending by Peter of the nobles of Ngonde to catch the chiefs of Ngana is a sign of the present centralization of power in his hands under Government. When we asked why the old custom had been changed we were told that it was "because now everything is under the control of Government and comes to the Kyungu."

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The gradual ousting by chiefs of the few ruling territorial nobles who still remain in the plain has continued in modern times, but the novel conditions have complicated the process and seem to be checking it. A recent quarrel between Kajuni and Mwenatupembe illustrates this. The head of the house of Kajuni, which is a junior branch of the

¹ I think this is also true of the less important territorial nobles of the hills, but am not sure.

Mwenegubwe, has attained more or less the status of a great chief; but his country originally belonged to the noble Mwenelupembe. One of the Kajuni married a daughter of Mwenelupembe and, in the usual way, became the effective ruler of most of the country. But the position was not formally clarified, Kajuni and Mwenelupembe are said to have lived on the best of terms, "and there was no boundary between them." After the arrival of the Europeans Kajuni was recorded in the Government list as the "Headman," for taxation purposes, with the consent of Mwenelupembe. And this meant that Mwenelupembe received no share of the tax money. But then, recently, Kajuni sold some of their land to a European for a tobacco shamba without consulting Mwenelupembe, who was furious, and demanded his own tax register and to have a boundary formally marked out between them. And this has now been done. The present cash value of the status of a ruler has altered the economics of the situation, the decline of the religious status of Mbande lessens the comparative importance of the royal blood, while new occasions of dispute between the rulers are now present.

The "coming out" (*uwanka*) has ceased in Ngonde owing to the smallness of all the present chieftoms, both in area and numbers, and the impossibility of finding sufficient land and followers for two successors to any local chief.¹ There has been no "coming out" since 1913. Each local chief is now succeeded by one younger full-brother (or one son) alone. But still among these "Village Headmen" popular favour determines their position. If his subjects do not like a "Headman" they move away to his neighbours, and every emigration reduces his salary by 3d. a year.

(c) CONCLUSION.

Now the more democratic form and the greater centralisation of the modern constitution of Ngonde is very largely the product of inevitable social forces. Granted the general conditions of contact between Africans and Europeans in Central Africa, a decline of the religion of Ngonde, with the consequential change in the relations of chiefs with their leading commoners, could not possibly be avoided. Nor could the old local autonomy possibly be fitted in unchanged to any modern administrative system. And Ngonde is not unique in this, similar changes, equally inevitable, can be seen in most areas of Central Africa.

Nor is the relative poverty of the majority of the Native rulers of Ngonde today a unique phenomenon either. Richards² has shown the

¹ Owing to the climatic difference land is scarcer in Ngonde than among the Nyakyusa; but the implications of this fact we did not specially study.

² *op. cit.*

NYAKYUSA COSMOLOGY

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thought to be embedded in the visibly growing parts of the body of a chief, and the horrifying practice of plucking out the hair and nails of a dying man is an assertion of the value of vitality, energy, force of personality in a leader. [773] [776]

The separate origin of chiefs and people, and the reciprocity between them, are constantly emphasized. Among many primitive peoples a myth of common origin is the charter for unity, and foreign lineages are linked by some fiction to the dominant line; but among the Nyakyusa it is the *reciprocity* between cultivators and cattle-owners, between 'owners of the soil' who ate their food raw and immigrants who brought with them cattle and fire, which is the basis of unity. The chiefs (like the descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers or the Voortrekkers) speak of themselves as having brought civilization to a savage land, but they acknowledge the contribution of the previous 'owners of the soil' in a way in which the white Americans and South Africans do not. Characteristically, the dichotomy of chiefs and commoners is couched in terms of descent, but in fact this is a fiction, for the younger sons of chiefs join the ranks of the commoners, and the mother of a chief is often of commoner origin. [82]

The complementary character of the economies of chiefs and commoners is matched, in belief, by a balance in mystical power. The divine kings have an innate creative power while the commoners have pythons in their bellies with which to destroy their enemies. It sounds like a myth of good and evil put about by the chiefs, but we never heard it expressed in that way even by Kasitile, who so feared and hated the commoner priests. The destructive power of the commoners can be used morally, to maintain the established order, as well as irresponsibly by witches. The constitution was a balance between chiefs and commoners, not a dictatorship. Chiefs maintain their position by feasting their men on beef, and this, the Nyakyusa think, prevents the witches from attacking; sated with meat their pythons 'lie quiet'. 778 85

Ultimate power is symbolized by the python, for though the chiefs—like English kings—are commonly associated with lions and leopards, the terror of the grove of Lubaga, and the source of the *isigila* medicine upon which the potency of divine kings and chiefs depends is a python, like that which lies in the belly of a witch. The most fearful thing of the tropical forest (and the forests on the Livingstone escarpment and Rungwe mountain are but the remains of much greater ones) is a natural symbol for power. [825]